

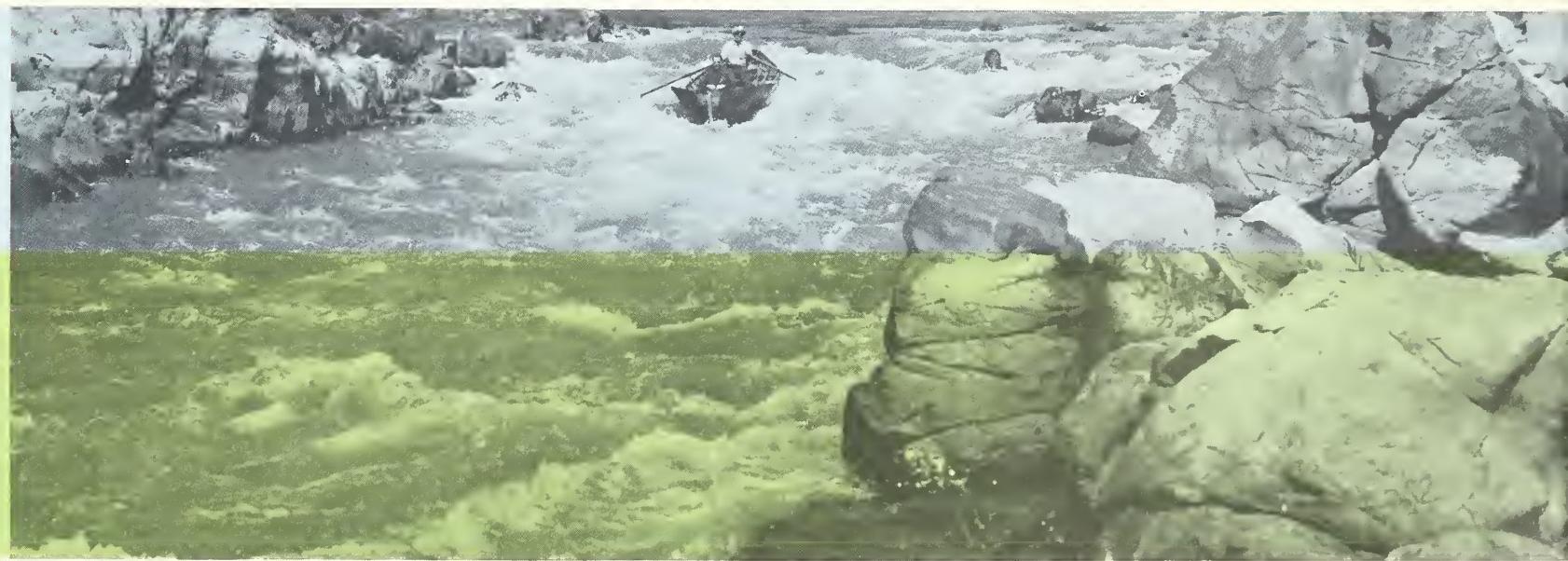
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# WILD RIVERS



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# WILD RIVERS

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America's rivers flow deep through our national consciousness.  
Their courses beckoned us to explore a new continent and build a nation, and we have come to know, depend upon and love the rivers that water our land.

We have harnessed many of our rivers, dedicating some to navigation, others to power, water supply, disposal of wastes. But we have not yet made adequate provision to keep at least a small stock of our rivers as we first knew them: wild and free-flowing. In a nation as bountifully endowed with rivers as ours, it is time to do so.

A measure of the beauty, the allure, the adventure that is the unique quality of clean-flowing water should be re-





tained in every section of our land. We have enjoyed wild rivers as have our forebears for generations. Our descendants deserve the same opportunity.

America has a number of rivers, still relatively wild, untamed, or unspoiled. Some are but slim threads of nature, winding through a rural landscape. Many of these are close to our population centers. Other wild rivers are isolated by geography, flowing, perhaps, through public parks or forests—wilderness rivers, remote in every way.

Alternative uses are rapidly preempting our remaining wild rivers. Their numbers diminish as the recreational need for them grows. It takes but one harness to change a river's character forever. Future generations are entitled to know the wild river heritage that has been so significant in the development of this Nation and its character. If they are to know that heritage, we must now make provision, Federal and State, to keep some of our rivers, or portions of them, wild and free, protected from uses that destroy their natural beauty and recreational desirability.

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Stewart L. Udall  
Secretary of the Interior

Orville L. Freeman  
Secretary of Agriculture



# WILD RIVERS

"You could go on forever. You know it. Your muscles have gone supple-hard and your hands are crusty as dry raw-hide, and your head has cleared, and your boat goes precisely, unstrenuously where and how you want it to go, and all your gear falls into its daily use with thoughtless ease. There is merely not enough river, not enough time. You don't miss anyone on God's earth's face. You're no more bored . . . than a chickadee is bored, or the passenger on the sunny bow, or a catfish; each day has its fullness, bracketed by sleep. In the evenings by the fire and in the clear mornings are when you have it strongest—the balance, the rightness, the knowledge."

These are reflections upon a canoeman's voyage and a free-flowing river—thoughts of writer John Graves on an American experience.

The balance, the rightness, the knowledge, he says—Why? Perhaps because into him, into all of us, there has been

bred a love of rivers, like our love of prairie winds or the mountains or the sea.

The challenge and the charm of live, flowing, vocal water are imbedded deeply, universally, in us. Back to our beginnings goes this love, back to Nile and Jordan, Tiber and Thames, to all the nameless rivulets that have watered life down the ages and generations, for "a river went out of Eden." So involved have we been with rivers that even today it is impossible to see flowing water without feeling the old allure, the old respect, the old grateful affection.

Certainly river lore and river love flow throughout American history. Since the days when Henry Hudson and Captain John Smith sailed into the New World's estuaries, rivers have been the avenues of our destiny. They beckoned and bore on the great discoverers—LaSalle, La Verendrye, Lewis and Clark. And we nameless tens of thousands,

we soldiers and pioneers, voyageurs and trappers, we keelboatmen, raftsmen, fishermen, lumberjacks and engineers, worked and adventured along the rivers, up and down. In rivers we found strength and fulfillment, and beauty, and today when we hear the current calling, river meaning—past and present and yet to come—surges up within us.

We can understand, therefore, when the canoe man says, "I had the feel of the river now, and the boat, and the country, and all of it was long-ago familiar."

For it is familiar to us, as individuals and as a Nation. Surely most of us recollect a river that once flowed through our experience. Did it lap the meadows of our farm, cool on the bare legs of our childhood; testing our willow pole? Did it loop around our town, widening accommodatingly into a swimming hole?

Perhaps its rapids challenged the agility and daring of our youth. Perhaps from city esplanades we have watched a river's majesty. Certainly we can remember seeing from a road or bridge some bend of bright water gliding between green hills.

And so, even nowadays, though attractive diversions sparkle our paths, many of us still seek out riversides. There we sense the old mysteries of origin and destiny; enjoy the sinuous beauty of the river world. For as Henry Van Dyke once said of a stream, "The eye never wearies of following its curls and eddies, the shadow of the waves dancing over the stones, the strange, crinkling lines of sunlight in the shallows." Rivers have a grace to share with those who participate in their varied, ever-changing yet eternal life, and who know the whisper, the shout, the melody of flowing water.





Once, when our Nation was younger, livelihood and recreation came down the same stream channel. We worked along America's waterways and gained our river pleasures in the doing. But today, a single channel too seldom brings us both material and recreational reward. The streams have branched apart; the harmony has gone. Often, now, our material needs alter or destroy a river's life, its character. There must be dams for water and power, dredged channels for navigation and control, diversions to irrigate the land. The rivers flush down our many wastes. Where these uses are important, the old music is hushed, the water stilled or murky. On some, banks are flooded or scarred; buildings crowd the shores.

We pay this price and are grateful for the benefits.  
 Yet we lament the passing of old, deep-loved river joys. And we ask,  
 how many free-flowing rivers must we sacrifice to nourish this kind of need?  
 Must we extirpate the last wild laughing stream?

No, certainly that need not be. Thousands of miles of such waters still flow freely throughout America. These are the wild rivers, unspoiled by the intrusion of civilization; untamed by man. Protected by geography and terrain, or maybe by a mere shielding grove of trees, they yet remain secluded, remote; each one a world of its own.



A few such rivers are wholly wild—wilderness rivers crashing through canyons, mountains, or the great north woods, or welling silently from deep southern swamps. Many flow unimpeded as slim threads of undisturbed nature winding through well-developed countryside. Nevertheless, these too can be called wild. Even there wild nature lingers on. There live the muskrat and the mink. The bittern stands his silent watches. The wild duck tends her brood. The turtle basks. There river beauty and river values remain, and with the poet one can "enter into the joy of running water."

Often only segments of our rivers remain wild today. Many of them are headwaters of streams whose lower valleys have long been claimed by civilization. But their upper reaches remain little changed, and there one can find long inviting stretches of free-flowing, unspoiled water, enough, perhaps, for exciting white-water runs or quiet float trips of two days or more.





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These compensate, at least in some degree, for those many other rivers we have dedicated to our material welfare. These remaining wild ones, glacial torrent or meandering rural course, each individual, often unique, offer us the recreation channel of America's river use today.

Their flow cannot be measured in dollars or acre-feet. Measure it rather in music, in the leap of a trout, the beat of a heron's wing, the angle of slick, dark water at a rapid's brink, the arc of rainbow mist below.



Are these important?  
Ask the couple fishing. They may explain,  
as did Robert Louis Stevenson, that "There's no music like a little river's...  
It takes the mind out of doors . . . and . . . sir, it quiets a man down  
like saying his prayers."





Or ask the two sturdy youngsters toting their canoe and packs through scented hemlocks to run rapids in the wilderness—just as Americans have for generations. Author-conservationist Sigurd Olson has answered for them: "As long as there are young men with the light of adventure in their eyes or a touch of wildness in their souls, rapids will be run."

There will be such young men. Shall there be rapids for them? Will we keep some rivers wild to test our youth and find our old serenities? Can we not strike a balance between the two great channels of river use, between the harnessed and the free? Why not indeed, though it require a national policy!

Let us protect the free channel before our material enterprises preempt it, or before we build so affectionately, so densely along its banks that we smother the very charms of seclusion and natural beauty that we seek.

President Johnson has reminded us that the time has indeed come "to identify and preserve free-flowing stretches of our great scenic rivers before growth and development make the beauty of the unspoiled waterway a memory."

A special Wild Rivers Study Team under the joint direction of the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture has recommended establishment of a system of wild rivers under either State or Federal administration. These could be dedicated in perpetuity to beauty and to recreation. Thus would their free flow be ensured and, where necessary, cleansed; the river banks and river scene protected or, if need be, restored.



Along wild rivers flowing through public lands, ample area could be devoted to recreation and scenic protection. Wild rivers traversing private lands would be "slim threads," including only narrow abutting strips to protect the beauty of the river banks and for public access to the water. In many places, easements would provide for this conservation and use while maintaining private ownership of the land.





An inventory of our remaining heritage of wild streams by the Wild Rivers Study Team has made an initial identification of 73 rivers or river segments which appeared to have wild characteristics. Of these, more than a score have been given detailed study.

These include the Suwannee in Georgia and Florida; the six headwater streams of the Savannah River in North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia; the Cacapon in West Virginia; the upper Susquehanna in New York and Pennsylvania; the upper Hudson in New York; the Allagash in Maine.

Others are a wilderness section of the Wolf in Wisconsin; the upper St. Croix, forming part of the Minnesota-Wisconsin boundary, and the Namekagon, its Wisconsin tributary; the Buffalo in Tennessee; the Current in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways in Missouri; an upstream segment of the Eleven Point, also in Missouri; the Buffalo in Arkansas; and a segment of the Niobrara in Nebraska.





Still farther west are the upper reaches of the Green in Wyoming; a segment of the Missouri in Montana; the gorge section of the Rio Grande in New Mexico; the Middle Fork and a segment of the main Salmon in Idaho; the Middle Fork of the Clearwater in Idaho, including its Lochsa and Selway tributaries; the three forks of the Flathead in Montana; a portion of the Skagit in Washington, including its Sauk, Suiattle and Cascade tributaries;

the lower Rogue in Oregon; the lower Klamath in California, and a portion of the Middle Fork of the Feather in California.

All these, it was found, have notable free-flowing, scenic characteristics, and many appear well qualified for inclusion in a wild rivers system. Many more await further study, and perhaps action to preserve their character.



An American system of wild rivers, down through the years,  
would assure us some river-magic,  
and those long-loved opportunities which wild rivers grant  
and for which no other outdoor sources of  
enjoyment can substitute.  
As naturalist Aldo Leopold has pointed out,  
“The good life on any river may . . . depend on the perception of its music,  
and the preservation of some music to perceive.”

We need not accept his sad anticipation that “perhaps our grandsons, having never seen a wild river, will never miss the chance to set a canoe in singing waters,” nor with him take solace in being “glad I shall never be young without wild country to be young in.”

Better, it would seem, to help John Graves realize his hope for his young daughter: that “the world she will know will still have a few rivers and other quiet things in it.”



Rivers selected for preliminary consideration by the Wild Rivers Study Team

included all or one or more segments of the following:



Allagash in Maine,  
Animas in Colorado,  
Ausable in New York,

Big Fork in Minnesota,  
Big Hole in Montana,  
Black Warrior in Alabama,  
Blackfoot in Montana,  
Blue in Indiana,  
Buffalo in Arkansas,  
Buffalo in Tennessee,

Cacapon in West Virginia,  
Cache la Poudre in Colorado,  
Cheat in West Virginia,  
Middle Fork of the Clearwater in Idaho,  
Colorado in Utah, Arizona, Nevada and California,  
Connecticut in New Hampshire and Vermont,  
Cumberland in Kentucky and Tennessee,  
Current in Missouri.

Deschutes in Oregon,

Eleven Point in Missouri,

Middle Fork of the Feather in California,  
North, Middle and South Forks of the Flathead in Montana,  
French Broad in North Carolina and Tennessee,

Gasconade in Missouri,  
Gila in New Mexico,  
Green in Wyoming,  
Greenbrier in West Virginia,  
Gros Ventre in Wyoming,  
Guadalupe in Texas,

Hoh in Washington,  
Hudson in New York,

James in Virginia,

North Fork of the Kern in California,  
Klamath in California.

Linville in North Carolina,  
Little Wabash in Illinois,

Madison in Montana,  
Manistee in Michigan,  
Methow in Washington,  
Missouri in Montana,  
Mullica in New Jersey,

Namekagon in Wisconsin,  
Niobrara in Nebraska,

Oklawaha in Florida,

East and West Branches of the Penobscott in Maine,  
Pere Marquette in Michigan,  
Potomac in Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia,

Queets in Washington,

Rio Grande in New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas,  
Rogue in Oregon,

Sacramento in California,  
St. Croix in Minnesota and Wisconsin,  
St. Joe in Idaho,  
Salmon in Idaho,  
Salt in Arizona,  
San Juan in Utah and New Mexico,

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Smith in California,  
North Fork of the Snake in Idaho,  
Susquehanna in New York and Pennsylvania,  
Suwannee in Georgia and Florida.

Tangipahoa in Mississippi and Louisiana,  
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Upper Iowa in Iowa,

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North and South Forks of the White in Colorado,  
Wind in Wyoming,  
Wolf in Wisconsin,

Yellowstone in Montana and Wyoming,  
and Youghiogheny in Maryland and Pennsylvania.







*"Here are your waters and your  
watering place. Drink and be whole again  
beyond confusion."*

Robert Frost









*“But the real way to know a little river is not to glance at it here or there in the course of a hasty journey, nor to become acquainted with it after it has been partly civilized and spoiled by too close contact with the works of man. You must go to its native haunts; you must see it in youth and freedom; you must accommodate yourself to its pace, and give yourself to its influence, and follow its meanderings whithersoever they may lead you.”*

Henry Van Dyke

*"You will find angling to be like the virtue of humility,  
which has a calmness of spirit and a world of other blessings attending upon it."*

Izaak Walton







*"Whoso walketh in solitude,  
And inhabiteth the wood,  
Choosing light, wave, rock, and bird,  
Before the money-loving herd,  
Into that forester shall pass,  
From these companions, power and grace."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson





*“And always the water flowing, earthy, majestic, Fed with snow and heat, dew and moonlight.*



*Always the wide, sure water."*

Stephen Vincent Benét





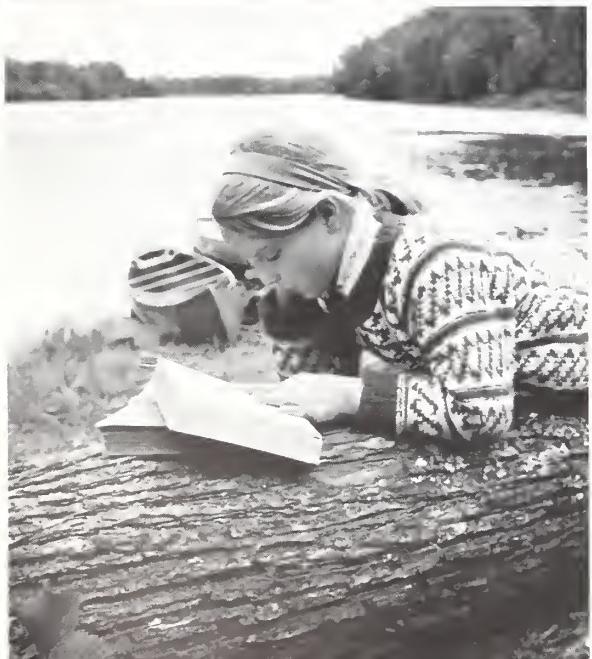


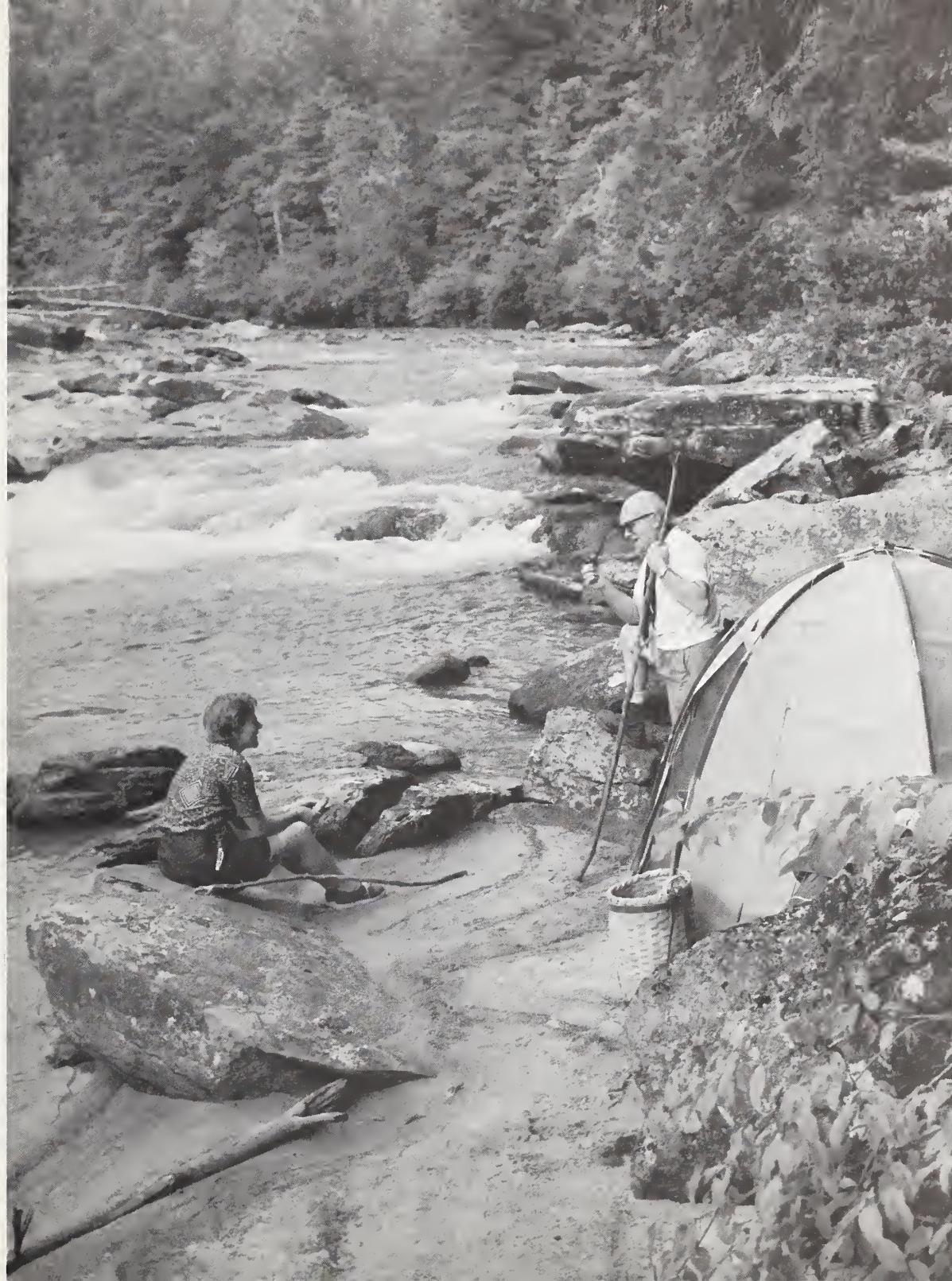
*"Swift or smooth,  
broad as the Hudson or  
narrow enough to scrape your gunwales,  
every river is a world of its own,  
unique in pattern and personality.  
Each mile on a river will take you further from home than a hundred miles on a road."*

Paul Brooks



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*“When you defile the pleasant streams . . .  
You massacre a million dreams . . .”*

John Drinkwater





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*"This absolute freedom  
gives every hour an intense lucidity."*      Florence Page Jaques

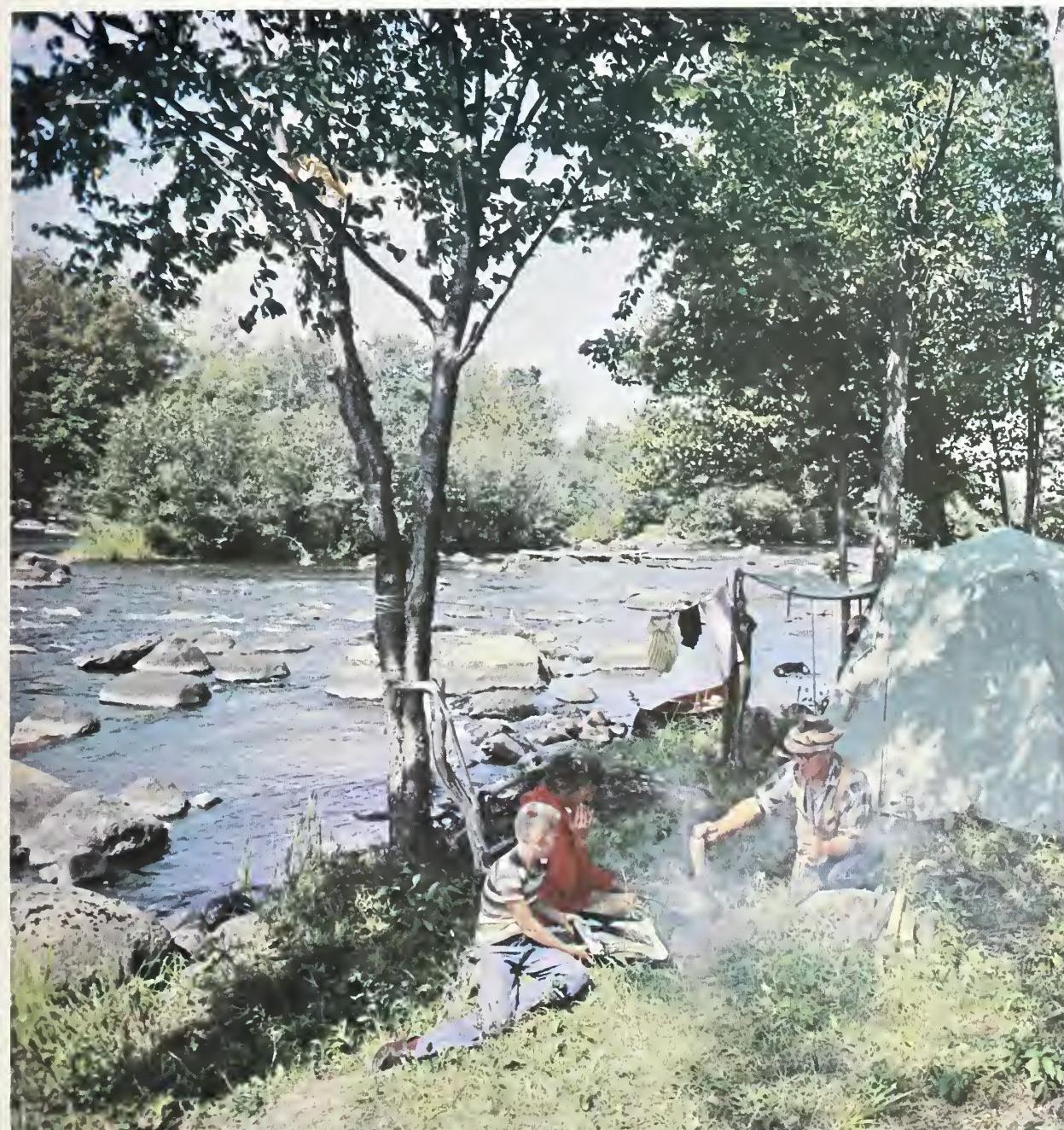


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*"The mist was all gone  
from the river now  
and the rapids  
sparkled and sang.  
They were still young  
as the land was young.  
We were there to enjoy it, and the great machines seemed far away."*

Sigurd F. Olson





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*“Come down someday,  
and we will take a walk along the river.”*      Lyndon B. Johnson







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This booklet, a joint report of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, was printed with private funds.

Photographs are by the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and by the National Park Service, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. However, the photograph on page 7, right, is by the North Carolina Wildlife Commission, and that on page 38, left, is by Wolf G. Bauer, of Seattle, Washington. The John Graves quotations are from *Goodbye to a River*.

The publication was designed by Graham Associates (Incorporated), Washington, D. C., and was printed by Prince Lithograph Co., Inc., Fairfax, Va.

May 1965



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